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## Press Release

May 14, 2010  
Dayton, OH

### Joe Mullins Receives Appalachian Outreach Committee's Unsung Hero Award.

Joe Mullins was the recipient of the **Outstanding Musician Award** granted during the **14<sup>th</sup> Annual Appalachian Unsung Hero Ceremony** presented by Sinclair Community College's Appalachian Outreach Committee Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.

The purpose of the awards is to recognize "unsung heroes" who have performed good deeds and built pride and self-esteem but have gone unnoticed or unrewarded for their exceptional efforts. Nominees for awards must meet the definition of Appalachian as per federal government guidelines; or must have demonstrated outstanding service within the Appalachian community. Sinclair Community College's Appalachian Outreach Committee strives to provide the Appalachian community with programs and community services which serve to eliminate barriers and ensure access to the learning process.

Joe Mullins is a southwestern Ohio native who has been an active bluegrass performer and radio broadcaster for over 25 years. Mullins' experience spans a lifetime, growing up in the industry with his father, fiddler Paul "Moon" Mullins, also one of Ohio's most notable radio personalities. While still in high school in the early 1980s Mullins began working on radio and playing banjo professionally. A founding member of the band, the Traditional Grass, Mullins toured and recorded nationwide until 1995. Nominator and bluegrass historian, Fred Bartenstein commented, "Joe Mullins has an encyclopedic knowledge of bluegrass and country music. Joe absorbed the styles of the great banjo players, Earl Scruggs, J.D. Crowe, Sonny Osborne, Ralph Stanley, Allen Shelton – and could not only play their licks to perfection but had found his own unique musical voice...driving, lilting, tuneful. He is a soulful tenor, lead singer and songwriter, evoking a half-century of bluegrass tradition."

Upon retiring from full-time touring in 1995, Mullins purchased **WBZI Radio (AM 1500)** in Xenia, Ohio. What began with WBZI has now expanded into a network of southwest Ohio radio stations collectively referred to as **Classic Country Radio** including the addition of **WKFI AM 1090** in Wilmington in 2003, **WEDI AM 1130** in Eaton in 2004 and most recently **FM 100.3**. Classic Country Radio's unique mix of locally produced programming including country oldies, bluegrass, news and information is heard 24 hours a day on FM 100.3 and [www.myclassiccounrty.com](http://www.myclassiccounrty.com). Mullins is on air weekdays 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. featuring bluegrass and old-time gospel music.

Although busy as a radio entrepreneur, Mullins did manage to record and perform on a limited basis with the band Longview, earning **Song of the Year** and **Recorded Event of the Year** awards from the IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) in the late 1990s. He was honored by winning an **Instrumental Recording of the Year** award in 2001 from the IBMA for his banjo work on Rebel Record's **Knee Deep in Bluegrass**. Mullins was also one of many artists in 2006 sharing **Album of the Year** honors for **Celebration of Life**, on Skaggs Family Records.

He also produces many major bluegrass events throughout Ohio annually. Mullins is now a busy musician again, touring heavily both regionally and nationally with his band, the **Radio Ramblers**. They have released two albums, the most recent, **Rambler's Call** on esteemed bluegrass label Rebel Records. Another album is projected for release in the fall. He is respected as one the top five-string banjo players nationally and is an occasional banjo workshop presenter.

Fred Bartenstein remarks, "Joe Mullins is one of the most prominent Appalachian business, cultural and civic leaders in the Miami Valley. Tens of thousands of Appalachians who listen to the radio already know who he is, but maybe not the full extent of his inspiring story and contributions. The 2010 Appalachian Award will help to remedy this and win him much-deserved recognition from other leaders in the region."

See [www.myclassiccounrty.com](http://www.myclassiccounrty.com) or [www.radioramblers.com](http://www.radioramblers.com) for additional information.